

SUMMARY STATEMENT BY LEGAL COUNSEL FOR M.I.T.
REGARDING ALLEGATIONS MADE CONCERNING DR. J. R.
KILLIAN, JR., BY NEWSMAN FULTON LEWIS, JR.

Mr. Lewis has stated that in April, 1947, Dr. Killian filed a statement before the Committee on Rules of the Massachusetts General Court opposing legislation to ban members of subversive organizations from state employment, opposing compilation of a list of subversive organizations by the State Attorney General, and opposing the establishment of a state committee on subversive activities.

After a thorough search of all available files and records, Dr. Killian is unable to find any legislation proposed on these subjects at the date in question, other than a proposal for the establishment of a state commission on subversive activities. Nor is he able to find a copy of any statement made by him on the occasion described by Mr. Lewis, and he has no personal recollection of having made such a statement. It is entirely possible that Dr. Killian agreed to have his name recorded in opposition to the bill proposing the establishment of a state committee on subversive activities, along with several Massachusetts college presidents. A search of newspaper files shows that the conservative Boston Herald opposed the bill editorially and that the directors of the Boston Chamber of Commerce opposed it. At a later date, when the Massachusetts State Legislature did establish a state commission on communism, Dr. Killian gave this commission full cooperation whenever he was called upon to be of help to it.

Mr. Lewis has referred to another statement which Dr. Killian made in February 1948, opposing "anti-communist legislation which would bar Reds from teaching in Massachusetts."

Dr. Killian did make a statement at that time, as did Dr. Conant, President of Harvard, and the heads of other major educational institutions in Massachusetts. The position that he took on that occasion, opposing what was then known as the Barnes Bill, was done at the request of the then President of the Institute, Dr. Karl T. Compton, and Dr. Killian appeared in his behalf to express their common views. The opposition which Dr. Killian expressed to the bill in behalf of the Corporation of the Institute was directed primarily at its unworkability, to its technical looseness as a bill, and to the requirements it would have imposed upon the colleges and universities in the state to undertake policing responsibilities beyond their competence. The bill which Dr. Killian and others are listed as having opposed did not pass the State Legislature. As stated above, when the Legislature did enact a carefully planned and considered bill for the establishment of a state commission on communism, Dr. Killian gave this commission full cooperation and support.

Mr. Lewis has referred to a statement in the Daily Worker about the case of Dirk J. Struik in which Dr. Killian is supposedly quoted as saying that the removal of a university instructor for his personal beliefs would be a violation of academic freedom.

In 1949, shortly after the name of Dr. Struik, a faculty member of M. I. T., had been mentioned by a witness in the trial of eleven Communist leaders in New York, Dr. Killian issued a statement making explicit the policy of the Institute regarding appropriate action in case any of the Institute's faculty were indicted. In that statement Dr. Killian emphasized that the Institute is unequivocally opposed to communism, and that it is also sternly opposed to the Communistic method of dictating to scholars the opinions they must have and the doctrines they must teach. With respect to Dr. Struik, who was not at that time under indictment for any offense, who had denied

that he had committed acts improper for an American citizen, and who held a permanent tenure appointment at M. I. T., Dr. Killian stated the belief of the Institute that he should be considered innocent of any criminal action unless he were proved guilty.

Mr. Lewis neglected to report, in implying a softness toward communism in this episode, that as soon as Professor Struik was indicted, he was promptly suspended as a member of the faculty at M. I. T. and continues to be on suspension, having no contact with students and no responsibilities at M. I. T. Because an indictment against him is pending in the courts, legal counsel of the Institute have advised that we should not engage in any public discussion of his case because of the possibility that such discussions might be construed as being prejudicial either to his case or to that of the state against him.

Mr. Lewis has stated that during the 1954 Gray Board hearings on the Oppenheimer case, Dr. Killian signed an affidavit in which he stated that Dr. Oppenheimer was "a man deeply devoted to strengthening the security of the nation."

This quotation should not be made out of context with the circumstances under which the affidavit was made, or without considering the true picture of Dr. Killian's relationships and contacts with Dr. Oppenheimer prior to that time.

The affidavit which was introduced in the Oppenheimer hearings was a factual statement about Dr. Killian's experiences and observations of those times when he saw Oppenheimer in action, and the above quotation was explicitly related to his impressions at meetings which Dr. Oppenheimer and he attended. It was written without any knowledge of the testimony presented at the hearings, or of the conclusions subsequently reached by the Gray Committee. Dr. Killian never knew Oppenheimer well and had only come in contact with him fortuitously as a result of Oppenheimer's having been invited

by his predecessor to give a lecture at M. I. T. and as a result of Dr. Killian's appointment on the Science Advisory Committee, to which Dr. Oppenheimer also had been appointed by President Truman. Dr. Killian had nothing to do with Dr. Oppenheimer's appointment to this Committee. Mr. Lewis implies that on Dr. Killian's part there was something planned or contrived in the fact that he attended meetings at which Oppenheimer was present. He had done so for the simple reason that he was discharging duties as a member of a committee appointed by the President. He had at no time sought Oppenheimer out or himself arranged any meetings with him. As stated in his affidavit, on those occasions when Dr. Killian did see him, he observed no evidence that would raise questions about his loyalty or integrity. He has not seen Oppenheimer or talked with him since the Atomic Energy Commission hearing, or for that matter since Oppenheimer was denied clearance and therefore was barred from attending meetings of the Science Advisory Committee.

If one wishes to make an examination of Dr. Killian's affirmative attitudes and actions with respect to communism, security, and the defense of the United States, one can find evidence of sustained opposition to communism, consistent advocacy of strengthening the military position of the United States to keep us superior in all respects to the Russians, and a series of specific assignments which have been devoted to strengthening the United States and combatting Russia in the cold war. A number of these assignments have been in the classified area, and Dr. Killian is not at liberty to describe them. If it becomes necessary, Dr. Killian would assume that the White House or other appropriate officers in Government might indicate the fact that he has been engaged in efforts under the auspices of the President which have stressed the importance of our building further military strength, which included recommendations which have been acted upon

by the National Security Council, and which have involved contributions to increasing the effectiveness of our intelligence. Dr. Killian is sure that no one who knows the contents of the report of the Technological Capabilities panel of which he was Chairman could have any doubt about that report being utterly lacking in any softness toward the enemies of the United States. These are facts which he cannot express because of the circumscriptions of security, but people in the administration can if it becomes necessary and he believes they could do so without revealing any secrets.

Finally, one of the most extensive statements that Dr. Killian has made in regard to our own view of our current situation vis-a-vis the Russians may be found in the first of a series of lectures which he gave at Harvard this last summer on science and national security. In this lecture he urged that we not let the peaceful overtures of the Russians or the discussions of disarmament slacken in any way our drive to build our military strength and to maintain superiority over the Russians. He emphasized and reiterated that we have no choice but to be taut and alert in resisting the Soviets. This has been his general view throughout. It has led him to accept such extracurricular assignments as the chairmanship of the Scientific Advisory Panel of the Army, as the Chairman of a Review Committee of the Research and Development Board of the Department of Defense during the chairmanship of Mr. William Webster. It led him to undertake a special assignment of a highly classified nature for Mr. Lovett when he was Secretary of Defense. It has led him to support in every way he could the effective use of the resources of M.I.T. to strengthen our national defense, and it has led him to encourage and participate in various activities directed toward mobilizing our scientific resources for the improvement of our intelligence effort.

If you wish documentation on these positive aspects of Dr. Killian's attitude toward communism and toward the defense of the United States, it can be done, and the record will be extensive.

Phillips Ketchum
Legal Counsel for M.I.T.

February 14, 1956

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